

care delivery system so that it might continue to meet its military readiness and peace-time obligations at a time of continuous change for our base and force structure. In the process of deciding how to proceed, I met with and heard from many military family members, veterans and military retirees from around the country. I was inundated with suggestions for reform. In every meeting and every letter, I encountered retired service men and women who have problems with every aspect of the military medical care system—with long waiting periods, with access to the right kind of care, with access to needed pharmaceutical drugs, and with the broken promise of lifetime health care for military retirees and their spouses. I heard these concerns expressed as I have traveled across the United States over the past several months.

My distinguished colleagues, the Republican Leader, Senator LOTT, Armed Services Committee Chairman, Senator WARNER, and Ranking Member, Senator LEVIN, introduced a bill that also addresses the military health care system. The bill is S.2087, the "Military Health Care Improvements Act of 2000." I applaud my colleagues in rising to this challenge, and I am pleased to see that portions of legislation I introduced last month were included in their bill. However, I can not cosponsor this legislation because it does not do enough to reform the military health care delivery system for our veterans, especially our oldest veterans, retirees, and survivors.

I have several concerns with the legislation introduced yesterday.

One of the areas of greatest concern among military retirees and their families is the "broken promise" of lifetime medical care, especially for those over-age 65. S. 2087 fails to meet what I think is the most important requirement, the restoration of the broken promise of free lifetime medical care promised to retirees and their families who entered the service prior to June 7, 1956. The major veteran service organizations share my view that the number one priority is to take care of these older military retirees and their spouses who were promised lifetime medical care benefits. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of S.2003 that restores the broken promise given to retirees who entered the service prior to June 7, 1956. I pledge to work with the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Armed Services to fully restore the broken promise to our over-65 military retirees and their families.

In addition, there are some significant differences between S. 2013, the "Honoring Health Care Commitments to Service Members Past and Present Act of 2000" that I introduced in January with Senators COVERDELL, ROBB, HAGEL, JEFFORDS and BINGAMAN, and the health care bill being introduced yesterday.

My legislation would help repair the "broken promise" given to Medicare-

eligible military retirees and their families by restoring their access to military health care that was taken away when they turned 65. Additionally, S. 2013 offers health care options to retirees and would provide additional benefits to active duty servicemembers and their families. The hallmark of this legislation is that it offers several new choices to retirees and their families in their health care delivery services.

S. 2013 was drafted with the help of The Military Coalition and The National Military and Veteran's Alliance. The Military Coalition has strongly endorsed S. 2013, stating, "We applaud your leadership in introducing comprehensive legislation aimed at correcting serious inequities in the military health care benefit."

While S. 2087 promotes enrollment expansion in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) demonstration for Medicare eligible beneficiaries, it caps the enrollment levels to just 66,000 personnel. This would preclude world-wide or even nation-wide enrollment, a feature offered in my bill.

Additionally, S. 2087 expands TRICARE Senior Prime sites to only the major medical centers, not nationwide like my bill. This would exclude hundreds of thousands of our retired servicemembers, only addressing the needs of Medicare-eligible retirees and their spouses who happen to live near a small number of hospitals.

Finally, S. 2087 only has a mail-order option for pharmacy requirements of our Medicare-eligible retirees and their families and requires a \$150 deductible. My bill offers both a mail order and a retail pharmacy option. The mail order option only helps Medicare-eligible retirees who require long-term medication like blood pressure pills. However, if the retiree or spouse needs medication in a timely manner, it makes sense for them to be able to drive or walk to their local pharmacy and have their prescription filled. The bill I have offered allows for this option. The one introduced by my colleagues yesterday does not.

Mr. President, I commend my colleagues for their efforts to address many of these important military health care challenges. Not lost on any of us is the urgent need to address the over-age 65 issue since there are reportedly 4,000 World War II, Korean and Vietnam War-era military retirees dying every month. It is imperative that as changes are made to our nation's military force and continue to be made in the future with regard to base structure, that Congress not only stay focused on bringing health care costs under control, but that steps be taken to retain the health care coverage so critical to our nation's active duty personnel, their families, retirees, and survivors. While the world situation necessitates a modified force and base structure transformed for the new millennium, it should not carry with it an

abandonment of the responsibility that our nation has to assist those who have served our country to obtain access to the health care services they need.

Make no mistake, retiree health care is a readiness issue, as well. Today's servicemembers are acutely aware of retirees' disenfranchisement from military health coverage, and exit surveys cite this issue with increasing frequency as one of the factors in members' decisions to leave service. In fact, a recent GAO study found that "access to medical and dental care in retirement" was a significant source of dissatisfaction among active duty officers in retention-critical specialties.

I pledge to work closely with the Armed Services Committee, my respected colleagues from the committee, and from both sides of the aisle who have cosponsored my bill, as well as groups like the Military Coalition and the National Military Veterans Alliance, to work out our differences and not abandon the health care coverage needs of our nation's military retirees, their families, and survivors. We must pass comprehensive military health care reform to fulfill our broken promise to our military retirees while bolstering retention and readiness among today's servicemembers by assuring them that retention promises will be fulfilled once their active service is over.

Mr. President, this year will be, in the words of the Joint Chiefs, the year of health care reform. Whether my legislation, S. 2013—fully supported by the major veteran service organizations representing over 9 million members—is successful or not will depend on several factors: Congress' ability to realize real health care reform and provide the necessary resources, the Pentagon's ability to work with private industry to control costs on pharmaceuticals and health insurance plans, and the military retirees who utilize the system coming together and galvanizing support for the future of military health care. We can not abandon the "greatest generation" who are responsible for the successes and riches we currently enjoy in this great country.●

#### IN MEMORY OF "PEANUTS" CREATOR CHARLES SCHULZ

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, on February 12, we lost the creator of the world's most popular comic strip, Charles Schulz. The "Peanuts" comic strip was a daily staple for millions of people—not only in America but around the world.

While Charles Schulz' legions of fans mourn the loss of his creative genius, he was also a man with a wonderful family who cared deeply about him. I want to express my deep sympathy to his wife, Jeanne Schulz, his five children (Monte, Craig, Meredith, Amy, and Jill), his two stepchildren and 18 grandchildren. Our hearts are with you.

For half a century, the "Peanuts" comic-strip has been part of the fabric

of our national culture. Charles Schulz' illustrations have inspired us with its wry humor and endearing cast of characters. Who has not been touched by the trials and tribulations of Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy, and the rest of the Peanuts family?

Here is what some of Charles Schulz' peers had to say about his legacy.

Rob Rogers, editorial cartoonist of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, said of Charles Schulz' legacy to his profession:

Schulz revolutionized the comic strip. Not just with his simply and accessible art style but also his strong character development. He combined the innocence of childhood with the cynicism of adulthood to create realistic, idiosyncratic and empathetic icons.

Cartoonist Mort Walker, the creator of "Beetle Bailey" said of Schulz:

What he brought to the strips was a whole new attitude . . . [He] brought in pathos, failure, rejection, all that stuff, and somehow made it funny.

As one writer observed, Charlie Brown taught me

it's OK to lose. Losing doesn't mean giving up hope. No matter how many times he missed the football, lost the big game, or heard Lucy call him a blockhead, he still believed in himself. This is the lesson that helped me get through childhood and now helps me deal with the tangled kite strings of adulthood.

Charles Schulz was born in Minneapolis, MN on November 26, 1922, and was raised in St. Paul. He acquired an interest in cartooning while a teenager, but was drafted as an army infantryman in World War II before he could fulfill his career ambition.

In 1947, Schulz started a feature in the St. Paul Pioneer Press called "Li'l Folks." It was syndicated as Peanuts, launching an unprecedented 50-year run of over 18,000 comic strip installments.

At its peak, Peanuts appeared in close to 3,000 newspapers in 75 countries and was published in over 20 different languages to more than 355 million daily readers. Charles Schulz' television special, "A Charlie Brown Christmas," has run for 34 consecutive years. In all, more than 60 animated specials have been created based on "Peanuts" characters. Four feature films, 1,400 books, and a hit Broadway musical about the "Peanuts" characters also have been produced.

Charles Schulz' achievements are all the more remarkable because, throughout his career, he had worked without any artistic assistants, unlike most syndicated cartoonists. Schulz painstakingly drew every line and frame in his comic strip for 50 years, and unparalleled commitment to his art and profession.

In 1994, while speaking before the National Cartoonists Society, Charles Schulz said of his comic strip, "There's still a market for things that are clean and decent." Charles Schulz has given generations of children a cast of colorful characters to grow up with and to teach the small and large lessons of life.

In his farewell strip, Charles Schulz wrote, "Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy \* \* \* how can I ever forget them \* \* \*" These characters will stay with us forever and we will certainly never forget their creator, Charles Schulz.

There is still something we can do for Charles Schulz and his family.

For the past several months, I have worked on legislation to award Charles Schulz the Congressional Gold Medal for his outstanding career and community service.

In fact, on Thursday, February 10, just 2 days before Charles Schulz' passing, I formally introduced the legislation to award him the Gold Medal. While Charles Schulz can no longer personally receive this honor, the posthumous award would be the proper gesture to his wife Jeanne, their children, and to the millions of "Peanuts" fans around the world.

As the world's preeminent cartoonist, Charles Schulz is more than qualified to join the 17 other Americans who have received the Congressional Gold Medal for their contribution to the Arts.

I urge my Senate colleagues to join me in posthumously awarding Charles Schulz the Congressional Gold Medal. This would be one small token of our nation's great appreciation of this man who gave us all so much.●

#### RECOGNITION OF WIND RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL'S MS. TRACI ECCLES

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, last month I had the pleasure of visiting Wind River Middle School in Stevenson, WA. One of the reasons why the students at this school excel is because of its teachers and the commitment they demonstrate each day in their classrooms. One of the teachers who has made a tremendous impact on the education of her students is Ms. Traci Eccles. Ms. Eccles is a dedicated professional, a staff leader, a team player and most importantly, a teacher who encourages her students to grow. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Ms. Eccles' commitment to her students and award her with my 32d Innovation in Education Award.

As a teacher of language arts to 7th and 8th grade students for more than a decade, she is constantly working to improve the lives of her students. She has also teamed up with her colleagues to create school-wide programs on topics such as health and nutrition, student tolerance, and a hands-on study of the respective decades of the 20th century.

Six years ago, Ms. Eccles and her colleagues wanted to create more tolerance amongst their students and started a program to examine intolerance in the world and its impact. Eighth grade students must read a book by Elie Weisel, titled "Night," that tells the stories of human suffering and degradation during the Holocaust. The students must also keep journals and take part in discussions of current events.

Student reaction to the Tolerance Unit has been profound. At the end of the unit, teachers can see a much higher level of awareness among students reflected in how they treat and respond to each other. I applaud Ms. Eccles and her colleagues for taking the initiative and developing a program that has impacted their students such a positive way.

In addition, Ms. Eccles took on another project to give students a firsthand look at their country's history through a program called the Decades Unit. The entire school is divided into different groups and participates in a week long program where students put together historical fashion shows, learn and perform popular dances of each decade, and create a time-line outlining significant events in United States history.

Ms. Eccles' great work deserves our recognition. Through their creative ideas, dedication and hard work, Ms. Eccles and her fellow teachers have improved the lives of our children and created a greater sense of community and togetherness in their school.

My many visits to schools around Washington state have shown me that the people who see our kids everyday are the ones who should have the greatest say in their education. It is teachers like Ms. Eccles who are both the true strength of our education system and who can prepare our kids with a foundation for the future. I will continue my work to give teachers like Ms. Eccles more freedom to innovate and improve the lives of our children.●

#### CELEBRATE AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

● Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, in many ways, the life of Carter Woodson represents the history of his race in America.

As a young man in the late 1800s, he worked in the fields and in a coal mine. He took a break from the grueling work to educate himself, enroll in high school and graduate after only two years of instruction. He went back to the coal mines to support himself, attending school when he could, and eventually earned a doctorate in history from Harvard University. Mr. Woodson went on to become a passionate student and teacher of Black History, establishing an annual reflection on his culture's accomplishments and resilience: Black History Month.

In celebration of this month, I would like to recognize another leader who has worked hard to chronicle the history of people of African heritage: Dr. James Cameron, founder of America's Black Holocaust Museum, located in Milwaukee. This museum is dedicated to documenting the injustices that African Americans have suffered, and to remind us at how far we've come as a society from the racism of the past.

Dr. Cameron, the only known living survivor of a lynch mob attack in the